

44/1/2000

A 16

S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the
Total Eclipse of the SUN,
U P O N

April the 22d, 1715.

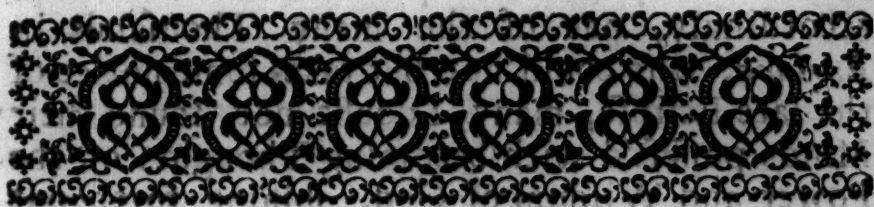
By JOSEPH BURROUGHS. K

Aut adversa eventura dicunt, aut prospera. Si dicunt prospera, & fallunt, miser fies frustra expectando: si adversa dicunt, & mentiuntur; miser fies frustra timendo: sin vera respondent, eaque non sunt prospera; jam inde ex animo miser fies, antequam a fato fias: si felicia promittunt, eaque eventura sunt; tum plane duo erunt incommoda, & expectatio te spe suspensum fatigabit, & futurum gaudii fructum spes tibi jam praestoraverit. Nullo igitur pacto utendum est istiusmodi hominibus res futuras praesagientibus. Favorinus apud Gell. XIV. 1.

L O N D O N,

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JER. X. 2.

*Thus saith the Lord, Learn
not the way of the Heathen,
and be not dismay'd at the
Signs of Heaven ; for the
Heathen are dismay'd at
them.*



HERE is somewhat awful in many things, from which we have no reason to fear any real Mischief; and particularly in such Aspects of the heavenly Bodies, as that which very lately appear'd to several Parts of this Nation. The generality of Eclipses indeed pass almost unobserv'd: but when there comes a total One, especially of the Sun, such as was that which happen'd two

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Days * since, 'tis too remarkable to be neglected. But the Observations and Judgments of Men are very different upon such occasions: and accordingly, out of the many Thousands in *England*, who could not but take some notice of the late Eclipse, many, I doubt not, found their Minds possess'd with becoming Thoughts of the Power and Wisdom of God, shining forth out of the awful Darkness which for some time overshadow'd them; probably very many, who had not exercis'd a Thought concerning God or a future State for a great while before, were struck with Amazement, and with a dreadful expectation of being suddenly call'd to Judgment; others were possess'd with a superstitious Fear of great Miseries and Calamities portended to the Nation; and others again, with a malicious Joy, to see so favourable an occasion for spreading Fears of this nature throughout the Land. Now 'tis with a Desire of giving God the Glory of his excellent Works, of assisting the Thoughts of some, who possibly may labour under Misapprehensions, and likewise of discovering the Folly and Wickedness of those who designedly improve such Mistakes, that I have chosen to discourse from these Words. In which are contain'd the three following Things:

I. A general Caution against learning the ways of idolatrous Nations: *Learn not the way of the Heathen.*

* April 22. 1715. About a Quarter past Nine in the Morning, the Body of the Sun was wholly hid from us by the Moon, for some Minutes: at which time three of the Planets, viz. Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury, with several of the fix'd Stars, appear'd. There was Darkness in part for near an Hour before, and as much after it was Total.

II. A

II. A special Warning against a particular Evil which prevail'd among the *Chaldeans*, to whom, about the time of this Prophecy, the *Israelites* were in Captivity: *Be not dismay'd at the Signs of Heaven.*

III. The Reason of this Warning: *For the Heathen are dismay'd at them.*

I shall offer something upon each of these Heads, and then endeavour to make some Improvement of the whole.

But before we enter upon any of the Particulars laid down, it may, perhaps, be useful to observe the solemn manner by which these Words are introduc'd; signifying the great Importance of the Message, and the Obligations of the *Israelites* to receive it. 'Tis usual with the Prophets, in many Messages of Importance, to begin, as in the first words of our Text, with, *Thus saith the Lord.* And such an Introduction as that justly commands an attentive Reverence, and a chearful Obedience, whether the Message be sent to a particular Person, or to a whole Nation. But even these Words themselves, as well as the Warning which follows, are brought in after a more solemn manner: Ver. 1. *Hear the Word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O House of Israel.* As if the Prophet had said, "Take special Notice of what I am going to deliver: 'tis what the Almighty and Ever-living God speaks after a particular manner to you *Israelites*, whom he has graciously distinguish'd from the rest of the World, and whom, by a special Revelation, he has taught the Knowledg and Worship of himself." This Message, as we have already observ'd, contains,

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I. A general Caution against learning the ways of idolatrous Nations; *i. e.* against complying with their idolatrous and other evil Customs. For when the most High says by the Prophet, *Learn not the way of the Heathen*, he does not forbid his People to learn any good thing by their Example, or indeed to do any indifferent Action, merely because it was practis'd by the Heathen Nations. There might be some things, indifferent in their own Nature, concerning which God had given them particular Commands; but then they ceas'd to be indifferent to them, and became Duties by a positive Institution. And in these things they were to regard the Divine Law, in opposition to the Heathen Practice. But still this did not tie up the *Israelites* from practising other things which were of an indifferent nature, even tho the Custom should have been receiv'd from the Heathens. Much less were the *Jews*, by the words of our Text, or by any other, forbidden to imitate the Heathen in any thing which was really good and useful in it self: But the Caution in our Text is level'd against all those *Ways*, *i. e.* against all those Principles and Practices, in which the *Jews* knew that the Command of God had made them to differ from the Heathens; and particularly against Idolatry, the Foundation of all the rest. This is the distinguishing Mark of the People of God from the *Heathens*, or *Nations*, in several Places, where it is not expressly mention'd. And accordingly, to this day, when we speak of a Heathen, we generally mean an Idolater. *The way of the Nations*, in this Case, was not to be learn'd or comply'd with, by the People of God,

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God, upon any account, how agreeable soever to their Senses or Passions, and how much soever the Heathens might despise and ridicule them for their Singularity. Nay, they are warn'd not to yield a Compliance to any such ways, tho' the utmost Violence should be us'd with them, in that Captivity, in which the *Israelites* were either, at the time of this Prophecy, actually detain'd, or which the Prophet foresaw would quickly overtake them. They are not only told, that they must never in their Wills or Affections give way to Idolatry; but are, in the words of our Text, assur'd, that it is not worth their while to become acquainted with the Particulars of idolatrous Worship, so vain and foolish it was in it self. But the principal thing design'd, is, that they should not entertain any Affection for, or shew the least Encouragement to what they must necessarily see and know. This general Caution therefore, against *learning the way of the Heathen*, signify'd to the *Israelites*, that they must avoid whatever might betray them into so unreasonable and so pernicious a Course, as that of Idolatry; that they ought to be content with God for their Teacher, and his Laws for their Rule, in all things, but especially in the Affair of Divine Worship.

I might here take occasion to shew the Folly of Idolatry, as a Reason to support this Caution; and its destructive Tendency, that we may all take special Care to avoid every Appearance of it. But, I believe, we are all convinc'd of the Folly of worshipping any thing besides the living and true God: since none but He is capable of receiving the Worship we offer; and since He alone is intitled to Divine Honours,
who

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who created, and who governs the World, who preserves his Creatures, and provides for them. And as to the pernicious Consequences of Idolatry; besides the wretched Blindness it brings upon the Mind, which is in a great measure its own Punishment, we cannot but know, that 'tis the highest Provocation in the World, for that God, who made all things, and has all at his Disposal, to see his Honour prostituted, *his Glory given to another, and his Praise to graven Images*, to vile Affections, or to any thing else besides himself. I shall therefore leave these general things, and proceed to what I principally design'd from these Words, as being more immediately suited to that particular Case, which is the occasion of this Discourse, and which at present makes so great a Noise in our Land: namely,

II. The Warning against an Evil, which more especially prevail'd among the *Chaldeans*, than most other Nations; the forming of Judgments, and Expectations from the Positions and Motions of the Heavenly Bodies: *Be not, says the Prophet, dismay'd at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathen are dismay'd at them.*

Now in discoursing of this Warning, I shall endeavour to shew,

1st. What we are to understand by *the Signs of Heaven*, and what they were intended for.

2^{ly}. How little reason we have to *be dismay'd at them.*

1st. By *the Signs of Heaven*, in our Text, we may understand the same which *Moses*, in his Account of the Creation, calls *Lights in the Firmament of the Heaven*, Gen. 1. 14. together with their various Relations and Aspects, one to-
wards

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wards another. Now not only the *two great Lights*, which were made, after a special manner, to rule the Day and the Night; but in general, all the *Lights in the Firmament of the Heaven*, are, in that Verse, said to be *for Signs and for Seasons*; or, as some render the words, *for Signs of the Seasons*. And, indeed, this seems to be the inspir'd Author's Meaning. As for the manner of Expression, *for Signs and for Seasons*; it is very common in the *Hebrew*, and in many other Languages; a figurative way of Speech expressing those things disjunctively, which must by the Understanding be join'd together. First, these Lights are said to be *for Signs*, and then presently are mention'd the things which they are to signify, namely the *Seasons*, the *Days*, and the *Years*: whereas, if we understand the word *Signs* in an indefinite Sense, and not confin'd to what follows, we are thro' the whole Text left in great Uncertainty; finding that there are *Signs* appointed in the *Heaven* for something or other, but not knowing for what. Besides, if we must take all the Parts of the Text disjunctively, then the *Lights in the Firmament* must be taken for *Seasons*, and for *Days*, and for *Years*, as well as for *Signs*. But we know, that the Celestial Bodies are not themselves *Seasons*, and *Days*, and *Years*, but only *Signs* of them, by such and such particular Motions and Aspects, as the All-wise and Powerful God, in the Course of Nature, has ordain'd to them. Neither can I see reason to believe, that every Motion or Position of the Heavenly Bodies has a special signification in it; tho' every Motion, and every Aspect, serves in general

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to advance the Glory of God's wonderful Wisdom and Power, in keeping up such a regular Tenour and Course in such vast Bodies, all created out of nothing. The Sun indeed (which, in the Chapter now quoted, is call'd the *Greater Light*) is said *to rule the Day*, as it is by the appearance of his Light, increasing and decreasing, that we measure the Length of the Day; and the Moon likewise *to rule the Night*, partly upon a like account. Thus likewise the Sun's Course (if we may so call it) is a determining Sign of the Year's beginning and ending, and of the various Seasons of it. And in general, the Sun, and the Moon, and the other Lights, are necessary Signs of the Seasons of Sowing, of Reaping, of Planting, and are useful in Navigation, and other things.

But these things are very well known, and taken for granted. The great Question, with regard to these Lights, and their different Appearances, is, whether they are not likewise design'd to influence Mens particular Actions, and to foretel extraordinary Events in the World. In answer to which, besides what Reason suggests, we have this to say, that the Scripture does not encourage us to believe any such thing, especially concerning the natural Order and regular Motion of the Heavenly Bodies. Indeed that God, who made both the Heavens and the Earth, the Sea, and all deep Places, has sometimes shewn how easy it is with him to put any part of created Nature out of its usual Course, when he thinks fit, by an extraordinary Instance of his Wisdom and Power, to confirm the Faith of his Servants: as in the Case of *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 8. who obtain'd a Promise,

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Promise, that *the Shadow of the Degrees, which was gone down in the Sun-dial of Ahaz, should be brought again ten Degrees backward*; as an Assurance that God would lengthen his Life, and deliver him and his People out of the hand of the King of *Assyria*. But these things are very different from the settled ordinary Course of the Celestial Bodies; and yet even these extraordinary things impos'd no Force or Necessity upon the Actions of any Man. These things, I say, are vastly different from the settled Order of Nature: and consequently, the ordinary Courses of the Heavenly Bodies cannot reasonably be accounted so much as the Signs of extraordinary Events upon Earth; unless we will suppose, that God prepares the Minds of Men, by his secret Influence, to be restless and inclin'd to Change, against such a time as the Heavenly Bodies will finish such or such a stated Course; which is a monstrous Supposition.

But again, besides those extraordinary things which have been done in the Heavens, for confirming the Faith of some particular Persons, there are several Passages of Scripture, which speak of *Signs in the Heaven*, and such as portend Destruction, or at least great Calamity and Misery to Men upon the Earth; particularly, that Passage in *Joel, chap. 2. ver. 30, 31.* quoted after this manner by the Apostle *Peter, Acts 2. 19, 20.* *And I will shew Wonders in Heaven above, and Signs in the Earth beneath; Blood, and Fire, and Vapour of Smoke. The Sun shall be turn'd into Darknes, and the Moon into Blood, before that great and terrible Day of the Lord come.* But besides that a great number of learned Interpreters

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terpreters expound all this whole Context of the Destruction only of the *Jewish* Oeconomy, figuratively compar'd to the Sun and the Moon, and the Heaven; which kind of Comparisons are very frequent in the Old Testament: besides this, if we take these things in a literal sense, I do not see how they can be understood of the ordinary and stated Course of the Heavenly Bodies, but of the extraordinary Direction given by the great Author and Disposer of Nature.

The same must be said concerning that other Passage, *Mat. 24. 29, 30.* where our Lord having spoken of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was indeed preceded by very unusual and terrible Sightings in the Air, adds, *Immediately after the Tribulation of those Days, shall the Sun be darkned, and the Moon shall not give her Light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory.* There are many other Expressions in the Context, which all seem to refer to the second Coming of Christ, unto Judgment. And if this be, as seems very probable, the Meaning of the place; these things cannot be understood of the settled and regular Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, which are the Cause of Eclipses, but of the Dissolution of all things at the End of the World: which, with regard to God's Pre-science and Eternal Duration, may be said to be *immediately after those Days*, our Saviour had just been speaking of. Some indeed still expound these words in a figurative manner, like those
in

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in *Joel*. But 'tis only the literal Sense which concerns us in the Affair of the *Signs of Heaven*. And if we do understand this Passage literally of *Signs in the Heaven*, we must conclude that they are extraordinary, and not the ordinary regular Courses of the Celestial Bodies. And consequently, the settled ordinary Courses of these Heavenly Bodies, such as Eclipses, and the like, cannot reasonably be look'd on as Signs portending any extraordinary Events at all. Having thus consider'd the principal Places of Scripture, which relate to the present Question, I now proceed,

2ly, To shew that we have no occasion to be dismay'd at these *Signs of Heaven*, of which our Text speaks. And one Reason is,

(1.) That they are the natural Course of the Heavenly Bodies, into which they necessarily fall, by the Motion which their great Creator first impress'd on them. Particularly, Eclipses are nothing else but the Interposition of the Moon between the Sun and the Earth, or of the Earth between the Sun and the Moon: which Interpositions are necessarily caused by the stated Motions of these Bodies, without any Conflicting, or Agony, or Striving among them, as ignorant Persons are apt to imagine. There are generally many of them in every Year; some visible in one part of the World, and some in another; according as these Bodies, traversing their respective Courses, must sometimes meet in one part of the Heaven, and sometimes in another. And were it not for these Motions, which are the Cause of Eclipses; instead of a few Minutes Darknesh in the day-time, there would be perpetual Darknesh in
some

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some Parts of the World, which now are stately enlighten'd ; and no Night in other Parts, which now receive the returning Changes of Darknes and Light, as we do. So that indeed these Eclipses, which so terrify inconsiderate Men, and of which designing Men make such advantages for the purpose of deceiving, are no more than the common Effects of those very Courses, whereby we enjoy the benefit of the Day for our Affairs, and of the Night for our Repose: so far are they from giving us any reason to *be dismay'd*. If they were not the common Effects of these Courses, they cou'd not be foreseen by human Observation. And yet 'tis manifest that they who have diligently observ'd the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies for any tolerable space of Time, can many Years before-hand tell, within a very small matter, when an Eclipse will begin, and when it will end. But again,

(2.) Another Reason why we ought *not to be dismay'd at these Signs of Heaven*, is, because they have probably as often been follow'd with good and happy Consequences in those places where they have fallen, as with unhappy ones. There are not wanting, in our own History, Facts enough to support the Truth of this Assertion. But it is not necessary to enter into a long Detail: For, a small number of Instances is enough to prove, that Eclipses, in particular, are follow'd sometimes with very happy Effects, as well as at other times with Effects not so happy ; that is to say, that 'tis a folly to ascribe either the one or the other to these *Signs of the Heaven*.

Not

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Not to go further backward than our own Memory ; there were two Eclipses of the Sun in the Year 1688. when by a happy *Revolution* our Religion and Liberty were rescu'd from the Jaws of Arbitrary Power. There were several more, according to usual Course, in the ensuing Reign of our Glorious DELIVERER. And what Reason can be given, why the *Reduction of Ireland*, the *Destroying of the French Fleets*, the *Settlement of the Protestant Succession*, and many other prosperous Events, shou'd not, according to the Astrological way of judging, be ascrib'd to them ?

Again, if from the Reign of King *William* we proceed to that of the late *Queen* ; 'tis observable that almost every one of the glorious Advantages with which her Majesty's Arms were bless'd, in opposition to the common Enemy, for about seven Years, was nearly preceded by some Eclipse ; and very often by what we call an Eclipse of the Sun. And 'tis almost endless to mention the number of the prosperous Battels we fought, the strong Cities we took, and others reliev'd, in that space of time.

So that, if we wou'd raise any Expectation at all from the Appearances of Heaven, compar'd with the History of our own Times ; there is at least as much reason to hope for prosperous Events from this last Eclipse, as to fear any thing unhappy. Nay more, according to the Astrological manner of Reasoning : since a Total Eclipse is, with those who follow this Method of thinking, accounted much more considerable, and to have a much greater Influence, than a partial one. But 'tis sufficient to our purpose,

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purpose, that it appears by the short Account now given, that Eclipses are far from being certain Signs of Calamity and Distress to the Places where they appear, being often follow'd with as happy Events as a People can wish for. And, besides what may further be said from our own History, it may safely be left to any capable and faithful Inquirer, whether taking one time with another, there has not as much Prosperity attended Cities or Nations in general, when they have been overshadow'd with Eclipses, or terrify'd with Comets, as there us'd to do at other times; and whether Princes have not died in as great Numbers, and Changes of Government happen'd as often, when there have been no such Appearances, as when there have. But,

(3.) The principal Reason why we ought not to be disturb'd or dismay'd at any of these things, is, because the Heavenly Bodies themselves, and all their Motions, are in the Hand, and at the Disposal of a righteous, a wise, and a merciful God. Neither the Sun, nor the Moon, nor any other of the Celestial Bodies, are able to do us any Mischief of themselves; nor indeed can they signify or portend any thing by their own Contrivance or Efficiency. If then they are in the Hand of God, supposing they should be Threatnings of Evil from him; yet those which are more direct, namely verbal Threatnings, deliver'd by the Prophets immediately from the Mouth of God, have been escap'd, and the threaten'd Judgments averted, by a Gracious God, upon the Repentance and Humiliation of his Creatures, as appears by the Case of *Nineveh*. But we have already

ready seen, that there is no reason to believe, that the ordinary Motions of the Heavenly Bodies do really portend any Threatning at all. However, the Blessed God is not restrain'd or guided by the Motions of the Celestial Bodies; but he himself directs and restrains them. But these things have a near Affinity with the following Head; for which reason I shall forbear enlarging, and proceed to consider,

III. The last Words of our Text, which are the Reason of the preceding Warning: *For the Heathen are dismay'd at them.*

As if the Prophet had said, "'Tis really a part of Heathenism to *be dismay'd* and terrify'd *at the Signs of Heaven*; and the more we give way to this unreasonable Fear, the more we do, like Heathens, cast off the Acknowledgment of the True God."

'Tis indeed no wonder, that they were in a Consternation *at the Signs of Heaven*, since they foolishly imagin'd, that all Events of human Affairs necessarily depended upon them, without recurring in their Thoughts to a First Cause, and a Free Agent, which is God. Many of the Heathen Nations believ'd that all things, even the voluntary Actions of Men, were govern'd, not by the Providence of God, but by the Power of the Stars; and accordingly they worship'd them, as if they had been rational Beings. They took the Heavenly Bodies for Gods, and form'd to themselves Images to represent them, as the Prophet intimates in the Verses following our Text. For tho he does not expressly say, that the Images there spoken of were Images of the Heavenly Bodies;

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dies ; yet whoever knows any thing of the History of the *Eastern Nations*, and their Idolatry, knows that generally the Images they worship'd, were Representations of the *Sun*, of the *Moon*, of *Saturn*, of *Venus*, or some other Celestial Body. And they had brought themselves to that height of Folly, as to believe, that by their magical Inchantments, the Spirit of the Stars was brought down from Heaven into these Images, which they made to represent them upon Earth ; and that the same Spirit operated in them for the benefit of those who worship'd them. Well therefore might the Prophet make use of this Fear of the Heathens, as an Argument of their Idolatry and Vanity ; and advise the *Israelites* not to be mov'd by their Example, but to look upon them, in their being frighted at the Signs of Heaven, much after the same manner, as they would if they saw them actually fall down and worship them ; for both must proceed from an idolatrous Principle. What room is there to fear God, or to trust in him, to pray, or perform any religious Service to him ; if any thing else besides himself must be so much dreaded, as the poor Heathens dreaded the Signs of Heaven ; looking upon them as Proofs of a fatal Necessity, which no Power could avert ? How can we be said to believe in the Wisdom or Power, the Holiness or Goodness of God, if we attribute so much to these Signs, as if they were either out of his reach, or Demonstrations of his being resolv'd to shew no Mercy, how humbly soever his Creatures should submit to him ? 'Tis certain that the Prophet taxes this unseasonable Dread of the Signs of Heaven for Idolatry, by the near Connexion

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nexion of the Matter of our Text with the following Verses. He had in our Text advis'd, *not to learn the way of the Heathen, nor be dismay'd at the Signs of Heaven, as the Heathens were.* In the next Verse he gives the Reason of his Advice; *For the Customs of the People are vain.* And then he shews their Vanity, both in their actual Idolatry, and in that superstitious Fear which was the Cause of it: Ver. 5. *Be not afraid of them, for they cannot do Evil, neither also is it in them to do Good.*

Having thus gone thro what was propos'd from these Words, I shall conclude with making a few Reflections upon the whole.

1. We see, that God's own Covenanted People had need of Cautions against Idolatry, and other things, which were altogether foolish and unreasonable in themselves. Let not us therefore think our selves above Admonition. I make no doubt but we all see the Vanity of open Idolatry, or Worship paid to Stocks and Stones; but however we have great reason to take care that we do not set up Idols in our Hearts, and attribute to our own vile Affections that Honour which is due to God alone. The Apostle Paul expressly calls *Covetousness* by the name of *Idolatry*, Col. 3. 5. and with like reason we may call *Pride*, or any other inordinate Affection, which gets the Mastery of us, by the same Name. We cannot be Slaves to any corrupt Passion, but we are at the same time Idolaters.

2. As to this particular Case of *the Signs of Heaven*, we see the Folly of *being dismay'd* at them; and that if we examine this Fear to the bottom, 'tis really no better than Heathenism,

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especially where it prevails to a considerable degree. I will not indeed venture to affirm, that all those who are troubled with any degree of this Fear, are Idolaters: but however, 'tis certain such Persons are not altogether clear of Superstition. And if they will seriously reflect, they must acknowledg, that such a Dread has a very pernicious Tendency. For it tends to shake the Foundations of our Trust in God, to make us doubt of his Wisdom, and Power, and Righteousness, and Goodness, and to banish his true Fear out of our Minds. It was this Delusion, whereby the *Chaldean* and *Egyptian* Priests kept all the Nations about them in a mighty Opinion of their Learning and Piety. But it was this likewise whereby they establish'd Idolatry the more effectually; putting those Constructions upon the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, which best serv'd their Turn; while they were sure the ignorant People could not disprove them.

And 'tis by the same Method that some uneasy Persons among our selves pretend to shew their Learning and Piety, by vain Predictions concerning dreadful Events portended by the late Eclipse. But in the mean time they betray either their Ignorance, or their seditious Falshood. They speak as they wish, while they affirm that it forebodes Mischief to our Excellent Sovereign, and his Illustrious Family. They would persuade us, that the Heavens are the King's Enemies; whereas 'tis manifest that the God of Heaven has been his Supporter and Defender, to their utter Confusion. They take abundance of Pains to prove themselves Idolaters;

ters ; and Idolatry is, perhaps, what they would gladly see establish'd.

But let us, by the sad Example of the deluded Heathens, and by the Warning of the inspir'd Prophet in our Text, be persuaded to put away all those Apprehensions which derogate so much from the Honour of God, and tend so much to the Detriment of our own Souls. Let us *render unto God the Glory due to his Name* ; believing that he rules in Righteousness, and delights in Mercy, as well as acknowledging that adorable Wisdom and Power, which are display'd in the several Motions of the Celestial Bodies. But the Glory which redounds to God from the Subject of our present Discourse, is so various, that I must crave leave to speak a few words of the Particulars by themselves: In doing which, I shall endeavour to apply each Particular to some practical Use.

(1.) That wonderful Order and Regularity which appears in the Courses of the Celestial Bodies, may convince us, that the World is not govern'd by Chance, but by a Mind supremely wise. And the Belief of God's infinite Wisdom, is a strong Argument towards persuading us to acquiesce in all Dispensations of Divine Providence.

(2.) That God, who was able to create such vast Bodies out of nothing, and has, thro so many Ages, preserv'd them in their several Courses, must needs be a Being of infinite Power; and therefore it concerns us to seek an Interest in his Favour.

(3.) Since

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(3.) Since the Blessed God, notwithstanding that infinite Wisdom and Power, which are display'd by *the Signs of Heaven*, gives a Caution in our Text, that *we be not dismay'd at them*; this is a Proof that he will govern rational Creatures by righteous Laws, and not by Signs. We ought therefore to expect that he will call us to account, whether we have acted agreeably to the Rules which he has prescrib'd. And one would think, that those who were by the late Eclipse put in mind of a *Day of Judgment*, could not suffer the Thought presently to wear off: But whether they do or not, yet that Day will e'er long overtake them. *The Day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night; in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat: the Earth also, and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up.* Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolv'd, what manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness? 2 Pet. 3. 10, 11.

(4.) The Condescension of the most High, in giving this Caution, is an Argument that he delights in Mercy; whereas he might suffer us to go on, without Warning, to our own Destruction. And this is a great Encouragement for our seeking his Favour. We especially, under the Dispensation of the Gospel, have all the Encouragement our Hearts can wish; since there is a Mediator appointed, with whom God is always well-pleas'd, and who is himself touch'd with a tender Sense of our Infirmities. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of Need, Heb. 4. 15, 16. Let us trust
in

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in the Mercy of God, thro Jesus Christ, for the acceptance of our Persons, and the Salvation of our Souls. Let us likewise trust in his Goodness for a Blessing upon the Nation; *and if God be for us, who can be against us?*

F I N I S.



the Total Eclipse of the Sun.
in the Mercy of God, who has
accepted of our Prayers, and the
our Sins. Let us have faith in his Good-
ness for a blessing upon every God
be for us, who can be against us?

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H. I. N. I. S.



